

## CLAIMS

### **What is claimed is:**

1. A network-based system for enabling users connected over the network to an OLAP system to select formatting options for reports requested for processing  
5 by the OLAP system comprising:

report requesting means for enabling a user to select a workbook comprising one or more reports to be requested for processing by the OLAP system; and

format specification means for enabling the user to select the format for each report in the workbook.

- 10 2. The network-based system of claim 1 wherein the format specification means enables the user to specify multiple levels of formats to be applied to the reports in the workbook.

3. The network-based system of claim 2 wherein the multiple levels of formats are applied in a hierarchical manner so that lower level formats supersede  
15 higher level formats.

4. The network-based system of claim 3 wherein the levels of formats comprise global formats, report formats, attribute/element/metric formats, and value formats in that hierarchical order.

5. The network-based system of claim 1 wherein the format of one of the  
20 workbooks comprises a merged report format.

6. The network-based system of claim 1 wherein the format of one of the reports comprises a combined grid and graph.

7. The network-based system of claim 1 wherein the format comprises rules to be applied to the report that the user may specify.

8. The network-based system of claim 1 wherein the format of a report comprises an autoformat that enables each recipient of the report to specify the format  
5 in which that recipient views the report when the report is received.

9. The network-based system of claim 1 wherein the format of a report comprises a scripted format created by a user for specialized formatting of the report.

10. A method for enabling users connected over the network to an OLAP system to select formatting options for reports requested for processing by the OLAP  
10 system comprising the steps of:

enabling a user to select a workbook comprising one or more reports to be requested for processing by the OLAP system; and

enabling the user to select the format for each report in the workbook.

11. The method of claim 10 further comprising the step of enabling the  
15 user to specify multiple levels of formats to be applied to the reports in the workbook.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the multiple levels of formats are to be applied in a hierarchical manner so that lower level formats supersede higher level formats.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein the levels of formats comprise global  
20 formats, report formats, attribute/element/metric formats, and value formats in that hierarchical order.

14. The method of claim 10 wherein the format of one of the workbooks comprises a merged report format.

15. The method of claim 10 wherein the format of one of the reports comprises a combined grid and graph.

16. The method of claim 10 wherein the format comprises rules to be applied to the report that the user may specify.

5 17. The method of claim 10 further comprising the step of enabling the user to specify the format of a report to be an autoformat that enables each recipient of the report to specify the format in which that recipient views the report when the report is received.

10 18. An electronic storage medium having code embodied therein for causing a processing system to enable users connected over a network to specify format of reports requested from an OLAP system, the medium comprising:

code for causing a processor to enable a user to select a workbook comprising one or more reports to be requested for processing by the OLAP system; and

15 code for causing a processor to enable a user to select the format for each report in the workbook.

19. The medium of claim 18 further comprising code for causing a processor to enable the user to specify multiple levels of formats to be applied to the reports in the workbook.

20 20. The method of claim 19 wherein the multiple levels of formats are to be applied in a hierarchical manner so that lower level formats supersede higher level formats.

21. The medium of claim 18 further comprising code for causing a processor to select a merged report format.

22. The medium of claim 18 further comprising code for causing a processor to enable a user to select the format of a report to include a combined grid and graph.

23. The medium of claim 18 further comprising code for causing a  
5 processor to enable a user to select the format of a report to be an autoformat that enables each recipient of the report to specify the format in which that recipient views the report when the report is received.